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Contact: Jo Ann Lloyd
(805) 756-1511

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Noted Historian, UCSB Professor To Present 'Beauty of Drag Queens' May 8 at Cal Poly

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Noted historian Leila Rupp will present the "The Beauty of Drag Queens" from 7 to 9 p.m. May 8 in the Business Building Rotunda (Room 213) at Cal Poly.

In her talk, sponsored by the university's History Department and Women's Studies Program, Rupp will raise questions about the stability of the categories "woman" and "man," "feminine" and "masculine," "heterosexual" and "homosexual."

"But does drag truly challenge the concept of female and male as distinct categories?" she asks. "Or does it confirm traditional notions of femininity and masculinity?"

Rupp will discuss the meaning of drag as examined through in-depth interviews with drag queens and observations of performances. Her research and talk are also based on information she has gathered from focus groups made up of members of the diverse audiences who go to drag shows.

She suggests that drag is an important tactic of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement, and that drag can serve as a catalyst for changes in values, ideas and identities in 21st century American society.

Rupp, co-author (with Verta Taylor) of the new book "Drag Queens at the 801 Cabaret," will hold a book signing after her talk.

A professor of women's studies at UC Santa Barbara, Rupp teaches courses on women's movements, sexuality, gay/lesbian history and women's history. She has also authored "A Desired Past: A Short History of Same-Sex Love in America" and "Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement," as well as numerous scholarly articles.

The public is invited to the free presentation. For more information, contact Cal Poly's Women's Studies Program at 756-1525 or womst@polymail.calpoly.edu, or go online to <http://www.calpoly.edu/~womst>.
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Cal Poly Public Affairs
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
805.756.7266
polynews@calpoly.edu